

CHAD FORET
RUNNER-UP

That Which Shines

Love delivered murdered birds. You could hear him
crying from his work truck even with the windows
up & us across the way. I was eating
lunch & I thought it was an animal.

Someone shot his dog between the eyes & left her
hanging from the bridge above Black Creek. She liked

to be touched behind the ears. Just for you to leave
your hand there. Her name was Loretta. She was

bluetick & basset. We asked if he wanted
to stay with anyone,

but he needed to be alone.
His shoulders seemed to be deboned.

He didn't have to make a noise. Last I saw him,
he seemed OK, as in quiet & alone in a corner,

nursing Sazerac. Ants were smothering inside their desire.
Maybe I'm mistaking immortality

for loneliness. Back home, our storms are in-
decisive, silence loves us inside out, as in

we're loaded with aloneness. Friend, I know
a guy in New Orleans who can paint her back to life,

& I don't mean the fleur-de-lis & tigereye
commodifying moons. He'll rip you open

with those horsehairs, put you back
together better. He won't force

cypresses to watch. She won't resemble moss,
become acrylic kitsch, some ersatz

sunset. He'll plant your truck
in the background, the sun a pale gear

on the asphalt. I know those fish savored
her oldness. Nothing will be spared.

The rotation of her shadow will be perfectly relentless,
the stem of a flower twisted into wind.

Don't you want your tragedy to spin
our woe around, to stab verbena in

the hair, to flood a perfect stranger?